

REV. CHARLES M^CGLAUFILIN, ST. ALBANS, VERMONT,

OCT. 10, 1894.

INTERVIEWED BY MR. WAKEHAM AND MR.

RATHBUN.

By Mr. Titcomb:-

You have lived in New York State, I believe?

A. Yes, sir; I came from Broome County.

Q. Have you had any experience in fishing on Lake Champlain?

A. Only this season.

By Mr. Rathbun:-

What is your sport fish here?

A. Bass chiefly and some pickerel. I went up to Alburg once, and I have fished out here on the bar for pike and had very good success there. I stopped at Mr. Sampson's *the Lake View House.*

Q. Do Mr. Sampson's patrons depend upon the pike as well as the bass?

A. Yes, sir. He had some other sportsmen,

would
and they ~~will~~ not take the bass unless they *were*
~~are~~ just the thing. I went to Franklin Pond,
~~recess~~ and there were with me two other gentlemen and a Frenchman as my guide; the next morning about 4 o'clock he anchored us on Bass Rock, and I caught eight bass there in succession; I had two on at once. I had bass that measured 20 inches and $21\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and we had a little pike. The next day in the morning we got a bass weighing $5\frac{1}{4}$ pounds.

A. The only danger that threatens Lake Cham-

Q. That is the small-mouth variety?

A. Yes, sir.

come to the fishermen, it is a little hard to

Q. Have you become familiar with this question which we are investigating of commercial fishing on the lake here?

Q. Now the small-mouth what is known as the white-

A. I knew nothing about it until I was at Alburg last summer; they were speaking about the netting of pike in the spawning season, and how the law seems to clash on the border line, so there seemed to be a sort of rivalry on the line here somewhere. I think it is very unfortunate to catch fish of any variety when they are spawning. fishery that has been carried on for

Q. The main question is as to whether any net fishing should be allowed either on this side of the line or on the other. Even if net fishing is allowed, of course it will be allowed only suitable protection and such protection as you suggest--in the spawning season. What is your opinion as to whether any net fishing should be allowed, and if so as to whether it would affect the interests of the sporting men.

A. The only danger that threatens Lake Champlain is net fishing; and as far as it affects the bass brings a high price in the market, but the sporting men I should say no nets; but when it comes to the fishermen, it is a little hard to take their fishing from them; I don't know to what extent that has been abused.

Q. Now the shad--what is known as the white-fish on the Great Lakes--~~the shad~~ is a herring and belongs to the salmon group. [#] It will bite only rarely; but it would be a good sporting fish, because many men are supposed to like fishing by sitting on the bank of a stream for a long time without getting a bite. [#] That fish can only be taken by means of nets. That is a fall fishery that has been carried on dur-

ing October and November. The fish apparently run up Mississquoi Bay, and with them are not taken many fishes which the sportsman wants. There would be a few pike, no bass. Now, of course, if pike are considered a sport fish here by that method you would take some, but very few. The greatest objection which is raised is on account of the spring fishing, which is the fishing intended for the pike, and it is a fish which is regarded as one of the most important market fishes everywhere. The bass brings a high price in the market, but the fishermen don't get many of them, and so the market fishermen claim a right to fish for them^{pike}. The sportsmen on Lake Champlain regard them as a sport fish, and it is the only place where we have found that they are regarded as a sport fish. Now, if the lake were only surrounded by Vermont and New York that would be all right; but with the interests of three states and Canada to gain nothing by giving up the whitefish, isn't it necessary to allow some net-fishing for that species of fish?

A. That is not done away with in our section.

Q. Canada said she would do away with net fishing pending this investigation.

A. In the western part of New York we have some natural fishing streams, and we have what is called wall-eyed pike; there was no end of those pike, and you could net them so that hundreds of barrels were shipped away.

Q. You can carry on any kind of fishing and exterminate the fish, but the thing is that net fishing should not be carried on without ^{proper} regulations.

A. That is the point, no fishing should be carried on without proper regulations, and those regulations should be enforced.

Q. Now they say that this net fishing has been carried on over 50 years, and many have said that the fish are just as abundant now as ever, but others have said that the fish have decreased in numbers.

A. Another thing: You go out to Alburg and in

the spring you get the nicest fish in the northern part of the lake, but you will not get anything weighing over $4\frac{1}{2}$ or 5 lbs. A little later you get schools, but the majority will average $1\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. of pike. You go to Burlington and you get magnificent pike in deeper water. Now I think that that takes out the prime fish and leaves the others there.

Q. It is the mature fish that go to the spawning ground?

A. The Maumee River runs in here, and they would naturally go to those ground instead of going so far.

Q. Do the majority of the fish go up there to spawn? Are there not other spawning grounds which people don't know so well about? The fact that they get those large fish at Burlington raises the question whether those fish don't belong to ~~schools~~ ^{schools} ~~fish~~ ^{fish} whose spawning grounds are elsewhere?

A. That is what I think.

By Mr. Wakeham:-

Do you consider the pike a game fish?

A. No, sir; they make a nice table fish if you have no bass; but as far as the fun of catching them is concerned I would just as soon take a good big perch.

Q. In different sections of the country the commercial fishermen have very different ideas from the sport fishermen; and so far as that is concerned men who ought to be in a position to guide either or both classes know but very little about it themselves; that is to say, we know but very little about the habits of our fishes. I know that during this year, without having a chance for personal observation, I have learned more about the habits of fresh water fishes than in all my life before. We have been among the fishermen and among the sportsmen since June steadily and done fishing, and there is a question as to whether either side as a rule understands what is best. In many cases isn't it better to allow the catching of fish by nets which may destroy the young of fishes which are desired in that region. In Lake Superior they are catching out the lake trout, they claim that the herring are increasing very rapidly in abundance. The herring is

one of the principal food fishes.

A. There are but few of those fish that destroy their own spawn.

Q. We have found the spawn of the trout in the stomach of the trout.

A. I presume that it is with those fish as it is with our quail--it is always an advantage to kill the roosters of the quail.

By Mr. Titcomb:-

Last year I stripped 210 fish and they ran 70 females and 140 males. I felt that it was almost a sin to ^{re}turn those males to the water, but the law obliged me to do so.

By Mr. Wakeham:-

The great trouble with a great many men that call themselves sportsmen is their own gratification.

The Witness:-

I understand your aim is to make this thing satisfactory between the people of Vermont and Canada touching the matter of net fishing.

Mr. Rathbun:-

Yes, sir.

The Witness:-

What length of time would that last?

Mr. Rathbun:-

We don't know. Canada considers the spawning period of the pike is covered by the period from the 15th of April to the 15th of May; that would mean fishing before that time and not after, because the fish have gone. This fishing is by the dragging of the seine; gill nets are not allowed.

Mr. Wakeham:-

I have thought that used in certain places and at the right times the seine was not a destructive engine.

Mr. Rathbun:-

We know of places where the seine has taken too many young fish which we considered ought not to be removed from the water. In other places they would be used to sweep the spawning grounds of the bass. ~~Ref. Wak~~

Mr. Wakeham:-

I don't think the sportsmen ever claimed that they took small fish. The immature fish don't accompany the poor ones on to the spawning beds. As far as the bass is concerned, there has been no question raised before us either by the sporting or fishing side of bass being taken in the seine.

The Witness:-

It is almost impossible to seine a bass; the law aims at prohibition, but it doesn't reach it.